

Ras Abu 'Ammar



Subdistrict: Jerusalem

Estimated population of Ras Abu 'Ammar in 1948: 719

Date of occupation and depopulation: 21 October 1948

Military unit: Harel Brigade, during Operation Ha-Har

Israeli settlements established on the village lands before 1948: None

Israeli settlements established on the village site after 1948: None

Israeli settlements established on the village lands after 1948: Tzur Hadassa

Ras Abu 'Ammar was a depopulated Palestinian village situated approximately 14 kilometres

west of Jerusalem. A secondary road linked it to the main road leading south towards Bethlehem. The village also had road connections with neighbouring Palestinian communities, including 'Aqqur, Dayr al-Shaykh, Bayt 'Itab, 'Allar, al-Qabu, and Wadi Fukin.

The village stood on an elongated hill extending from southeast to northwest. It was surrounded on three sides by the deep Wadi al-Sarar, whose course wound westward, while mountains overlooked it from every direction. Ras Abu 'Ammar lay less than one kilometre south of the Jerusalem–Jaffa railway line.

A main street, running from northwest to southeast, divided the village into two sections. During the British Mandate, modern buildings were constructed along the roads leading east and north towards al-Qabu and 'Aqqur, as well as along the main road to the south.

Boundaries of Ras Abu 'Ammar

Ras Abu 'Ammar was surrounded by the following Palestinian villages and localities:

- North: 'Aqqur.
- Northwest: [Dayr al-Shaykh](#).
- West: [Bayt 'Itab](#).
- Southwest: ['Allar](#).
- South: Wadi Fukin.
- Southeast: [al-Qabu](#).
- East: [al-Walaja](#).
- Northeast: Bayt Saqiya.

Architectural Structure of Ras Abu 'Ammar

Ras Abu 'Ammar had a rectangular plan, and most of its houses were built of stone. A principal street running from northwest to southeast divided the village into two sections. During the British Mandate, new construction extended along the roads leading to al-Qabu and 'Aqqur in the east and north and along the main road to the south.

In the late nineteenth century, the village was described as a stone–built settlement situated on a small ridge above an open and relatively level valley where the inhabitants cultivated olive trees.

Education in Ras Abu 'Ammar

The village had an elementary school. The surviving school building consisted of two stone rooms and stood southeast of the village site.

Economic Life in Ras Abu 'Ammar

- The lands of Ras Abu 'Ammar covered 8,342 dunams, of which 8,313 dunams were under Palestinian ownership and 29 dunams were classified as public land. No Jewish land ownership was recorded in the official 1944/45 village statistics.
- The village lands were used for agriculture and grazing. The principal crops were cereals, vegetables, olives, grapes, and other fruit. Olive groves covered approximately 100 dunams, although this figure formed part of the broader category of irrigated land and orchards rather than a separate additional category.
 - Agriculture depended on rainfall and spring water. Water flowing from the surrounding hills was collected in pools and distributed to irrigate vegetable plots and fruit orchards.
- Several small shops operated in the centre of the village.

Land Ownership in Ras Abu 'Ammar

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Palestinian ownership	8,313
Jewish ownership	0
Public land	29

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Total	8,342

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in Ras Abu 'Ammar in 1944/45

Land-use category	Palestinian land (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Irrigated land and orchards	925	0	925
Olive groves included within the orchard category	100	0	100
Cereal cultivation	2,791	0	2,791
Built-up area	40	0	40
Cultivable land	3,716	0	3,716
Uncultivated land	4,557	29	4,586

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres. The 100 dunams of olive groves were included within the 925 dunams classified as irrigated land and orchards and should not be added separately.

Population of Ras Abu 'Ammar

- Ras Abu 'Ammar had 339 inhabitants in the 1922 British Mandate census. All were Muslims.
- The 1931 census recorded 488 inhabitants living in 106 houses. However, these figures were reported jointly with the neighbouring localities of 'Aqqur and 'Ayn Hubin and therefore should not be treated as figures for Ras Abu 'Ammar alone.
- In 1945, the village had an estimated population of 620, all Palestinian Muslims.
- The population was projected to have reached approximately 719 by 1948. This is a demographic estimate rather than a contemporary census count.
 - The village was occupied and depopulated during Israel's occupation of

Palestine—the Nakba—and its inhabitants were displaced from their homes.

Year	Population	Notes
1922	339	British Mandate census
1931	488	Combined figure for Ras Abu 'Ammar, 'Aqqur, and 'Ayn Hubin
1945	620	Official population estimate
1948	719	Demographic projection
Estimated refugee population in 1998	4,417	Later demographic estimate

Occupation and Depopulation of Ras Abu 'Ammar

Ras Abu 'Ammar probably fell to units of the Israeli army's Harel Brigade during Operation Ha-Har. According to Israeli historian Benny Morris, the village was occupied on 21 October 1948 following a direct military assault. The operation formed part of Israel's occupation of Palestine—the Nakba—and resulted in the displacement of the village's Palestinian inhabitants.

The available academic sources identify the Harel Brigade as the formation responsible for the village's occupation. They do not conclusively identify the particular battalion that entered Ras Abu 'Ammar; accordingly, no battalion number is presented here as an established fact.

Israeli Settlements on the Lands of Ras Abu 'Ammar

The Israeli settlement of Tzur Hadassa was established in 1960 on the lands of Ras Abu 'Ammar, south of the former village site. The principal sources consulted do not identify an Israeli settlement as having been constructed directly over the village's built-up site.

Ras Abu 'Ammar Today

Stone rubble from the village houses is scattered across the site. Wild vegetation grows among the remains, together with almond, olive, and carob trees. Cactus plants grow on the southeastern and southwestern sides of the site. A two-room stone building that formerly served as the village school remained standing southeast of the site when it was documented by researchers.

Sources

- [Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Ras Abu 'Ammar.](#)
- [Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, Institute for Palestine Studies.](#)
- [Palestine Remembered: Ras Abu 'Ammar, Jerusalem Subdistrict.](#)